



The Brooklyn Paper

Including The Brooklyn Heights Paper, Carroll Gardens-Cobble Hill Paper, DUMBO Paper, Fort Greene-Clinton Hill Paper and the Downtown News



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Brooklyn: Bloomie's sleepover no biggie

MAYOR BLOOMBERG said earlier this week that if there is a transit strike, he would sleep at a city office in DUMBO so he could walk to City Hall over the Brooklyn Bridge.

The remark, predictably, set off intense preparations by city officials to accommodate the mayor. Meanwhile, a different set of preparations were being made in DUMBO. Entirely Brooklyn preparations, that is.

"What the hell do I care?" asked a counterman at Grimaldi's, the famous pizzeria that stands less than a quarter-mile from the mayor's would-be digs.

Given my reputation as a newshound (or a pizzahound, I sometimes get them mixed up), I asked the manager if he'd make a special pie for the mayor.

"What are you talking about, special pie?" the man said.

"Get out of here." (Note to self: ouch!)

This reporter had gone to the legendary pie shop — no slices! — to find out how the locals were preparing for the mayor's relocation.

Expecting excitement, or at least a soupcon of mild interest, I found instead that the "Bronx cheer" may be misnamed.

At The River Cafe, general manager Scott Stamford could not have been more bored by the topic of the mayor bedding down 15 feet from his front door (it is just a co-incidence that the mayor chose to sleep RIGHT NEXT DOOR to one of the best restaurants in town).

Stamford treated me like I was a health inspector on an unannounced visit. "You know," he sniffed, "the mayor has eaten here before."

Yes, I suggested, but this time, it'll be different. If the mayor is truly in emergency management-mode, he'll be wearing one of those fancy OEM "man of action" fleece pullovers — a clear violation of the River Cafe's "Jackets required in the dining room" rule.

"I think we can waive the rule for the mayor," Stamford said. "He could come in with a bomber jacket if he wants."

Across the street at Pete's Downtown, owner Pete Thrinstino said he was planning nothing special for the mayor (although perhaps Thrinstino should remove the penne arrabbiata from the menu, lest the mayor order a plate of this ethereal, but vaguely Middle Eastern-sounding, dish and then be accused of not supporting our brave troops in Iraq).

Frankly, Thrinstino isn't too focused on the real mayor. "We had Pacino in here once," he said, referring to the star of "City Hall."

EVEN THE MAYOR'S HOSTS at the OEM headquarters — officially surplus warehouse B-53 — were subdued at the prospect of late night games of "Twister" or making prank calls to 311 with their boss.

I stopped by the warehouse, you know, to welcome the mayor and offer him a pillow, but was stopped by a cop who called inside. Within a few minutes, OEM deputy press secretary Andrew Troisi (what, I don't rate an AC-TUAL press secretary?), came out.

Everything Troisi said was off the record (which was odd, considering that all he said was that the OEM staff would be happy to accommodate the mayor), but Troisi did confirm that the mayor would, indeed, be sleeping on a cot.

"We're OEM. We have plenty of cots inside," Troisi said before nervously putting the rest of the conversation again off the record (too bad, because he told me the secret burial site of Judge Crater).

From the OEM office, the mayor would have a half-mile walk to the Brooklyn Bridge. But he should not expect people along the route to be throwing rose petals before him.

See **MAYOR SLEEPS** on page 15



THE BROOKLYN ANGLE By Gersh Kuntzman

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MTA strands fans No new trains after Nets games



The Brooklyn Papers: Tom Gillet

By Gersh Kuntzman

The Brooklyn Papers

If 19,000 cheering Nets fans came pouring out of an arena at the corner of Atlantic and Flatbush avenues someday, the MTA is not going to add service to help get them home.

The transit agency, which many hope will play a significant role in reducing congestion resulting from Bruce Ratner's proposed Atlantic Yards mega-development, dropped this mini bombshell this week at Borough Hall, where Borough President Markowitz, local elected officials and Community Board chairs met to discuss Atlantic Yards issues.

The MTA refused to send a representative to the meeting, Markowitz said. Instead, the agency sent over a statement outlining its plans for service to and from Nets games at the Ratner arena.

"For Madison Square Garden is the ... model [for Nets game service] because it is about the same size and situated on multiple lines," Brooklyn elected officials — some who support Ratner's plan, others who oppose it —

could not disagree more.

"People who believe that Madison Square Garden is the same [as a Brooklyn Nets arena] don't know Brooklyn," said Assemblywoman Joan Millman (D-Park Slope).

Millman was most surprised by the MTA's admission that it does not add service before or after Knick games.

"How can they say their

regular service is sufficient?" she said. "That was very surprising to hear that."

A spokesman for the MTA said he would let the agency's statement speak for itself.

The MTA's statement also said that "buses are not a key component of any service plan" after concerts and games at Madison Square Garden — which also angered the Brooklyn contingent.

"How can they say that buses are not critical in Brooklyn?" asked Shirley McKee, chairwoman of Community Board 2, which lies to the north of the Atlantic Yards site.

McKee called on the MTA to include buses in the agency's traffic analyses of the area.

The borough's elected officials have been meeting regularly to prepare for the release of a draft environmental impact statement for the Ratner project. The DEIS, which is expected to be completed next month on traffic, suggest that much more work needs to be done to convince local officials that the \$3.5-billion Rat-

See **NO TRAINS** on page 13



On the road, two wins one loss: p. 13

Oy tannenbaum!

Borough President Marty Markowitz pulled the switch on Brooklyn's official Christmas tree this week — and also plunged into a growing nationwide controversy over what to call the seasonal evergreens. "They're 'Christmas trees,' not 'holiday trees!'" the beep told The Brooklyn Papers. "Next thing, people will tell me I light a 'holiday menorah' at home, not a Hanukkah menorah." **The Papers deconstructs Markowitz's holiday card, page 5.**

10,000 pennies for Yard thoughts

By Ariella Cohen

The Brooklyn Papers

Someone wants to know what Brooklyn thinks of Bruce Ratner's Atlantic Yards project — and that secret someone is willing to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to find out.

Thousands of Brooklyn residents have been paid \$100 each to attend focus group sessions conducted by a Cobble Hill marketing research firm.

The sessions centered on people's perceptions of the \$3.5-billion commercial, residential and arena mega-project — and how well Forest City Ratner is getting its message out about the project's purported benefits.

"They kept telling us how much affordable housing there would be," said one small business owner who participated. "They told us about the park. They told us about how many jobs there would be."

Another business owner in the same session called it "a bunch of talking points."

"We were rolling our eyes," said Erica Kalick, the owner of Erica's

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EXCLUSIVE

RueGlad and Baking Company.

Focus groups, which have become a staple of modern marketing, allow big companies to reach out to potential consumers and hear how well — or how poorly — their sales or public relations strategy is working.

In political campaigns, they are often used as a way of swaying public opinion under the guise of a neutral survey.

That seemed to be the approach

here, participants said.

"It was fun, but scary," explained one attendee. "I came in against the project, but by the time I left, my attitude was, 'Oh yeah, let's build. It's going to be wonderful!'"

Experts said focus groups allow politicians and companies to hide their intentions while testing various messages.

"It gives a grass-roots feel," said Tony Herbert, a vice president of Vital Marketing in Manhattan. "It helps identify the brand and the demand for the product."

See **THOUGHTS** on page 13

Having a ball

Historic sphere found in hidden draw

By Gersh Kuntzman

The Brooklyn Papers

The Giants won the pennant, but Sterling Deeb will get the cash.

Last month, the Gainesville, Georgia man got luckier than Bobby Thomson when he discovered a baseball signed by every member of the tragic 1951 Brooklyn Dodgers hidden inside a piece of furniture he'd just purchased.

Deeb paid \$650 for the antique desk at an auction of abandoned property. He didn't notice the ball until he was about to resell the desk.

"I heard something rattling around," he told The Brooklyn Papers, "which was strange because

I'd emptied all the drawers already."

The ball was in a secret "drawer behind a drawer," Deeb said.

Although he's a self-proclaimed Atlanta Braves fanatic, Deeb knew the importance of the discovery — more so after he had the ball's authenticity verified.

It held the signatures of four future Hall of Famers — Jackie Robinson, Pee Wee Reese, Roy Campanella and Duke Snider.

It's also signed by Ralph Branca, who gave up the homer to Thomson that cost the Burns the pennant in '51.

Deeb admitted he never considered donating the ball to the people of Brooklyn, where many still remember where they were standing when they

heard radio announcer Russ Hodges yell, "The Giants win the pennant! The Giants win the pennant!"

Instead, Deeb put the ball on eBay — item number 8735570432 — in an auction that ends at 10:30 pm Sunday. He expects it to sell for several thousand dollars. At press time, it was already up to \$910.37.

An independent auctioneer said Deeb shouldn't expect to strike it rich by selling a cherished piece of Brooklyn history.

"Balls with many signatures have proven to be less valuable than balls with one or two signatures," said Arlen Ellinger, president of Guernsey's, a Manhattan auction house. "It won't put his kid through college."



Found in a desk purchased at an auction, this ball is signed by everyone on the 1951 Brooklyn Dodgers.

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Biggest snowball fight ever!

Slope resident wants it to happen in Prospect Park

By Jordana Rothman
for The Brooklyn Papers

Like unplanned pregnancies and Dylan Thomas poems, Jonathan Rosen's great idea was conceived over a round of stiff drinks. In Rosen's case, the drinks coincided with the season's first snowflakes last week—and Rosen had a Eureka moment: he wanted to hold the world's largest snowball fight in Prospect Park.

After consulting Guinness World Records, the famous chronicle of record-breaking absurdity, Rosen quickly moved to challenge the existing snowball champions, the Wauconda Lions Club of Illinois, which drew 3,084 hurlers to a field of honor in January.

Rosen has a benevolent agenda beyond the thrill of eternal fame.

"Winter is a tough time," he said. "And with people being angry with the government, Iraq, the economy, it's just good for morale."

The fleeting sense of goodwill that surfaces sometime between Halloween and New Years has worked to Rosen's advantage, setting hundreds of Rolodexes a flutter after his initial Craigslist post about the proposed winter war game.

It has since generated a deluge of enthusiastic responses offering everything from grassroots networking ("A friend of a friend's boyfriend knows someone at Borough Hall") and press coverage to hot cocoa and Web site design. Thanks to word of mouth, Rosen's project seems to be, well, snowballing.

But no good deed goes unpunished. Rosen, a chemist for a New Jersey-based pharmaceutical company, has been inundated with calls and been forced to juggle his responsibilities at work with tasks and



Jonathan Rosen, who wants to organize the world's largest snowball fight in Prospect Park, holds a snow baller Wednesday night.

hurdles associated with his event.

"This is quickly becoming too much," he said this week via email. "Yesterday, I didn't get to sleep until well after 3."

In addition to authenticating his claim with Guinness—which requires independent media coverage of the event, signed verification by at least two public notaries, and visual footage—Rosen faces a thicket of city regulations against such fun.

The Parks Department, for example, stipulates that a permit must be obtained for any event drawing more than 25 people. And an event whose success depends upon amass-

ing more than 3,000 people has, as a bureaucratic might put it, a greater burden of proof before getting the required permit.

A Parks spokesperson said the department is open to exploring the idea, although Rosen hasn't officially requested a permit. The park has hosted large-scale events in the past, but never an event that requires a snowfall, which is somewhat difficult to plan for in advance.

Parks rules state that a permit request must indicate a specific date.

Given the litigiousness of today's society, Rosen has looked into insurance coverage, which he expects would be "more expensive than, say, a 3,000-person poetry reading."

He hopes that the backing of impressive Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz will sway city officials. Markowitz called the event "a way for nations that disagree to settle their differences."

Despite that seal of approval, the burdens of weather and insurance seem to give Rosen's project a snowball's chance in Tampa.

Somewhat, though, he seems to have maintained footing through his red-tape tango. He's even had a few

minutes to consider team names.

"Something about this

whole process screams 'Calvin and Hobbes,'" he said. Confident that he will be able to surpass the 3,000 mark, Rosen has also begun to delegate work to an eager lineup of Brooklynites and hopes to have an informational Web site running in the coming weeks.

"I'm getting more and more excited about this as the positive feedback keeps coming in," he said in a recent Snowball Fight Update. "I really believe we can make this work."

Would-be participants should email Rosen at brooklyn-snowballfight@gmail.com for updates.

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AP: 'Squid' rules

Associated Press

Brooklyn played host to the best movie of the year.

"The Squid and the Whale," Noah Baumbach's darkly comic tale of growing up in a dysfunctional Brooklyn family during the 1980s, has been named top film of 2005 by Associated Press critic Christy Lemire.

"There isn't a false note in this funny story about married writers who are divorcing, and how the split affects their sons," Lemire wrote in her year-end roundup.

"Writer-director Noah Baumbach's film, loosely based on his own '80s adolescence in Brooklyn, is poignant and observant, hilarious and achingly sad, often at the same time. Jeff Daniels is perfect as the pompous patriarch whose glory days have long since passed. Daniels gets excellent support from Laura Linney as his wife and Jesse Eisenberg and Owen Kline as their confused kids."

Lemire also praised the non-Brooklyn films "Capote," "Syri-

am," "Good Night, and Good Luck," and the documentary "Mur-

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Two more OKs for Bridge 'park'

By Ariella Cohen
The Brooklyn Papers

Plans for the Brooklyn Bridge Park residential, commercial and open space development moved forward with back-to-back approval votes by two state bodies this week.

On Wednesday, the Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corporation unanimously approved the plan it had created with the Empire State Development Corporation, which gave its own approval the next day.

The plan — which relies on luxury development within the project to pay for public greenspace — will now move forward towards a final approval early next year.

Many members of the public say the financing scheme will jeopardize the public character of the site's park-like components.

Area residents got another chance to complain about that scheme on Tuesday, when project architect Michael Van

Valkenburg joined city officials at a briefing on the \$150-million development.

Privately owned development will amount to 8.2 acres — or 10 percent — of total parkland.

"There is always going to be a conflict between condo residents and park users," said Atlantic Avenue Betterment Association President Sandy Bulbova. "The financing needs to be worked differently. I still feel that way."

Van Valkenburg avoided commenting on the development's commercial element, emitting exasperated sighs each time the topic surfaced.

Van Valkenburg mostly stayed out of politics, but he did field several tough questions about the demolition of a building near the intersection of Old Fulton and Water streets.

The 1936 Modernist warehouse — also known as the Purchase Building — is slated for demolition.

Preservationists want to see it



A model of a hotel on Pier 1, part of the proposed Brooklyn Bridge Park waterfront development, at Polytech University's Dibner Hall in Downtown Brooklyn on Tuesday.

converted for recreational use, but Van Valkenburg said that the bulky building must be razed to improve views in the park.

"It is very important that people in the park know where they are going and that there is a

sense of connectivity between all parts of the park," he said.

Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corporation President Wendy Levenson offered an olive-branch to project critics at the end of the presentation.

"We want to assure you that the park will be built before all development starts," she said.

The development would stretch from the Manhattan Bridge to Atlantic Avenue. Planners say it will include a

luxury hotel, condos and retail space, plus more than a mile of open space including sports fields, basketball courts and a large "safe-water zone" where swimming in the East River will be permitted.

Profits down for Ratner

By Ariella Cohen
The Brooklyn Papers

The company that wants to build an arena for the struggling New Jersey Nets had a bad third quarter of its own.

In an earnings statement released last week, Forest City Enterprises, the parent company of Atlantic Yards developer Forest City Ratner, reported a 30-percent fall in profits.

Profits were \$55 million, or 54 cents per share, down from \$79 million, or 78 cents per share, over the first nine

months of 2004.

But according to CEO Charles Ratner, who is Nets owner Bruce Ratner's cousin, the slip in profit is only temporary.

"We believe these results will be more than offset by a strong performance in the fourth quarter," Ratner said in a statement.

The weak profits for the Cleveland-based real-estate giant stemmed from more land purchases and fewer property sales than during the same period last year, experts said.

In addition to the \$100 million FCE sunk into the MTA rail yards for the Atlantic Yards project, the company acquired more than 400 acres for a golf course in North Carolina and moved forward with a mega-mall in Denver.

The appetite for land does not seem to be diminishing anytime soon.

Last week, Washington, DC selected Forest City Enterprises to partner with a local development corporation on a five-acre parcel near the city's new baseball stadium, a project that, like the Nets arena, requires the use of eminent domain.

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VOX POP

To elect a thief

The Brooklyn Papers

Assemblyman Roger Green — currently running in the tenth congressional district — told the New York Times that voters don't think it's a "major issue" that he stole \$5,000 from the state. We asked district residents if Green is right.



"A stealing politician is a corrupt politician. Of course, he might do some work for the good of the people in general, but you could hardly avoid that if you are in a high position of power. But regardless of what he does for the good, a corrupt politician is not a good politician."

Thomas Duddy, Brooklyn Heights



"It's about honesty. A politician should be accountable for all he does. And as voters, we should be concerned about who a person is before we put him in office. We need to make our politicians behave honestly."

Marion Bailey, Bedford-Stuyvesant



"A politician who steals has to go to jail. People don't have food to eat and he is stealing \$5,000. For what? I wouldn't elect a person who steals no matter what he does that is good for me. If he steals, he is a criminal. It's simple."

Birho, Brooklyn Heights



"Stealing is a symptom of badness. I work 12 hours every day to make my money so I can live. When I hear that someone steals money, it really pisses me off, especially when it is a politician. A politician who steals money, it really pisses me off, especially when it is a politician. You can forgive many people, but not a politician."

Radek Suvet, Downtown



"They are all criminals, whether they get caught or not. I try to listen to my heart and vote for the best person — but the truth is that, to get ahead in that business, you have to be willing to do what someone else wants in order to do what you want. It's a funny system."

Joe Barbar, Downtown

Interviews by Ariella Cohen
Photos by Tom Callan

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To Israel for unto us a Child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder. And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. — Isaiah 9:6

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But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousand, of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel, Whose going forth has been from Old to Everlasting. — Micah 5:2

W029-09

Brooklyn Papers PARENT

Holden smells like Teen Spirit

Homework. Teen Spirit hates doing it and Smartmom was forcing him to do it.

So ever since TS was a wee third-grader at Park Slope's sacred PS 321, Smartmom and TS have been in a destructive pas-de-deux over his school responsibilities and her responsibility to get him to live up to them.

Anti-authority by nature, Teen Spirit just doesn't get the point of it. When he leaves the school building he likes to leave all thoughts and responsibilities — of school behind.

Which means that night after night, Smartmom and papa Hepcat are thrust into the unenviable role making sure Teen Spirit reads his Gilgamesh, computes his algebra problems, and conjugates Spanish verbs.

But don't think Teen Spirit isn't up to the task. He's sharp as a pin and then some. At the risk of sounding like the cliché of a Park Slope parent, Teen Spirit's IQ is off the charts. Maybe he's just bored. Didn't Einstein flunk out of grammar school?

Still, Smartmom and Hepcat's efforts to lay the homework dragon are right out of a medieval epic. Teen Spirit hasn't read (yet?). The nightly battles with Teen Spirit have included slammed doors, screaming fights, hostile threats ("You better do it or, um, or, or else!") and complaints

from the downstairs neighbors.

Over the years, they've tried every kind of motivational strategy, including homework charts, tutors, positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement and more. On numerous occasions, they've had to make the television set, laptop, cellphone, and iPod off-limits.

And when that doesn't work, they put him in complete lock-down, watching him like a door-checker at the Food Coop until he gets the work done.

Who can blame TS for his disinterest in homework after a long day at school?

There's so much he'd rather be doing, like practicing with his band, (think Queen-meets-Bright Eyes) reading Manga books at Barnes & Noble, playing Connect-4 with his friends at the Cocoa Bar, or drawing anime superheroes.

Meanwhile, Smartmom's 8-year old daughter, the Oh So Feisty One, is "student of the week" when it comes to homework. In class, she writes the homework assignment down neatly in her daily homework book and checks everything off as it's done.

In many ways, OSFO is just so much more suited for classroom routines. And this thrills Smartmom no end. Worn down by Teen Spirit's homework histrionics, Smartmom is proud of OSFO's work ethic.

Which isn't to say that Smartmom and Hepcat aren't also proud of their male offspring, a creative iconoclast with decidedly off-beat charm. But his non-conformity is also, sadly, one of the things that drives them crazier than a rush-hour driver on Flatbush Avenue.

And that's where the anxiety comes in. Living in Park Slope, the pressure is on to produce perfect children. Smartmom has felt the pressure since she was a new mom at the post-partum exercise class at The Dance Studio comparing baby birth weights and developmental milestones with other moms.

Who knew people actually remembered their kids' Aggar scores? As time went on, Smartmom and her friends believed they could create the perfect child the same way many of them had become partners at law firms, bond traders and book editors.

To create superkids, they just needed the time and energy to Volvo them from school to Power Play for gymnastics, the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, Let's Play Chess, and the AYSO soccer field. Perfection was possible: it was just a matter of hard work (and plenty of Paxil).

And when the children disappointed with less-than-perfect grades or tepid interest in their parent's extracurricular choices (musical theater, rock climbing, hands-on science), Smartmom and her friends blamed themselves and resolved to work harder. Afraid to let their children make their own mistakes, they continued to shape them with rigor.

But kids will be kids. Last week,

Smartmom got a call from Teen Spirit's English teacher. "He hasn't been handing his homework in," the teacher said. "He owes me a couple of essays." At this, Smartmom's anxiety went into overdrive: Teen Spirit's second-quarter grade wasn't looking good.

When Teen Spirit got home that night, Smartmom and Hepcat read him the riot act. They'd already looked away his iBook. Instant Messaging was out of the question and there were more deprivations to come.

"We really don't mind if you want to sit in front of a Korean market on Seventh Avenue with a cup when you grow up," Hepcat said.

Teen Spirit stormed off to his bedroom. Smartmom wondered if Teen Spirit's performance in school was a referendum on their parenting. Maybe she and Hepcat could be better homework cops. But then, how to explain OSFO's enjoyment of all things school-oriented — from her Hello Kitty pencil holders to the homework folder filled with carefully finished homework assignments?

Dispirited, Smartmom was about to turn in for the night when she noticed that Teen Spirit's light was still on. She stuck her head in and saw that he was lying under his blue plaid comforter reading: "The Catcher in the Rye."

"Is that for school?" Smartmom asked hopefully.

"No," Teen Spirit said, clearly annoyed.

"Why don't you write one of those missing homework essays about that book?" she suggested.

"No, thanks. That'll ruin it," he said.

Neither of them said a word. Smartmom felt proud of Teen Spirit even if he didn't want to write the essay.

He appreciated Salinger's masterpiece for all the right reasons and not for the wrong reason (to get an English teacher off his back). Like Teen Spirit, the book's protagonist, Holden Caulfield, resents the superficiality, hypocrisy, and shallowness that he sees all around him. Adults are just phonies who make Holden (and, I'm learning, Teen Spirit) feel alienated.

Maybe Teen Spirit would never like homework and school would always be a chore. Still, Smartmom felt unyielding love for her baby boy who is now nearly six-feet-tall with a low voice and the beginnings of stubble on his face.

He needs to make his own mistakes and find his own way, that's for sure. But finally, Smartmom has realized that unless she supports the qualities that make Teen Spirit the spirited teen she's a phony like the rest of them.

Imagine that: Smartmom embracing her son's alienation. Well, it's a start.

Louise Sanford also edits Only The Blog Knows Brooklyn, which is at www.onlythelblogknowsbrooklyn.com.

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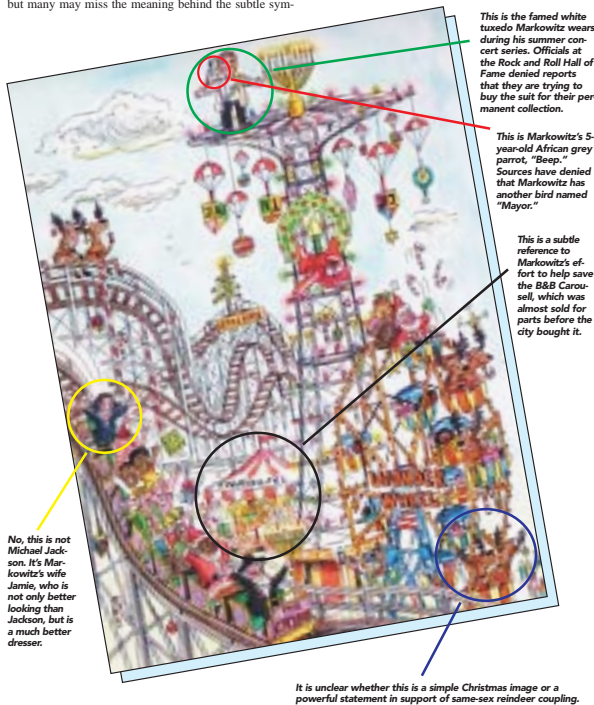
Deconstructing Marty's holiday greeting

The Brooklyn Papers

Thousands of Brooklynites will receive a holiday card from Borough President Marty Markowitz this year — but many may miss the meaning behind the subtle symbols on the front.

Please allow The Brooklyn Papers to clarify.

— Gersh Kuntzman



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Wedding Announcement

Cowan-Ries

Jane S. Cowan, 40, and Timothy C. Ries, 42, were married by the Honorable Alice Rubin Fisher in a civil ceremony, followed by a unique and charming reception at the Coney Island Museum on Sept. 24, 2005.

The bride, who grew up in Bay Ridge, is the daughter of Barbara and Roger Cowan of Bay Ridge. She attended John Dewey High School and earned a degree in the Growth and Structure of Cities from Bryn Mawr College in 1987, then went on to attain a Masters in Historic Preservation from Columbia University in 1996. She is currently employed as a freelance architectural historian and educator, working for clients such as the Municipal Art Society; Learning by Design, NY; Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation; Coney Island, USA; the Queens Historical Society; and the Alice Austen House Museum in Staten Island.

The groom is originally from Stamford, Conn., and is the son of Elizabeth B. and the late William J. Ries of St. Louis, Mo. He attended Westhill High School in Stamford, Conn., and earned his Associates degree at St. Louis Community College, and plans to complete his Bachelor's in Anthropology at City College of New York in 2006. He is employed as a freelance film and television production manager.

The couple now resides in Windsor Terrace.

Love story:

The bride says: "We had a non-denominational ceremony at the Coney Island Museum, which is part of Coney Island, USA, the only

arts and theater organization in Coney Island. It is housed in a 1917 building which originally housed Childs Restaurant. The building contains Coney Island memorabilia, including an original Steeplechase horse, fun house mirrors, bumper cars and wicker rolling carts.

"After the ceremony, guests were given tickets and rode Coney Island's legendary rides, including the Cyclone. Some viewed sideshow performances, other strolled along the famous beach and boardwalk, and some guests took a self-guided tour of Coney Island with a brochure I wrote.

"Guests then returned to the museum for the reception, which included music provided by my husband's large collection of 78 RPM records played on his wind-up Victrola."

Who proposed, and how?

The bride says: "Tim proposed at the Unisphere in Flushing Meadows Park in Queens. Using a vintage Polaroid camera, he took a picture of me. When the picture came out, and the top sheet was unfolded, it revealed the words 'Jane, will you marry me?'"

How did you meet?

The bride says: "We met on an online dating service, when Tim noticed that I owned a 1930s Philco radio. Intrigued and being a collector of vintage ephemera himself, he contacted me. We are both ardent admirers of all things vintage."

Visit www.TheBrooklynBride.com to submit your wedding or engagement announcement. Announcements are run on a space available basis. Our next issue is Jan. 14, 2006.



And the winners are...

Salvatore and Grigoli from Bensonhurst

Josephine Salvatore, 24, and Anthony Grigoli, 29, both from Bensonhurst, are the November winners of The Brooklyn Bride cruise-a-month giveaway, sponsored by Michael C. Fina.

The couple plans to be married on Oct. 27, 2006, in a ceremony at Regina Pacis, with the reception at Crest Hollow Country Club in Long Island. They expect 200 guests to join them.

The bride-to-be is the daughter of Peter and Connie Salvatore of Staten Island. She grew up near 69th Street at 20th Avenue in Bensonhurst, and graduated from New Utrecht High School in 2000. She is currently the manager of Hollywood Tans, on 13th Avenue near 74th Street in Dyker Heights.

The groom-to-be is the son of Francesca and the late John Grigoli of Dyker Heights. He also attended New Utrecht High School, graduating in 1993. He is employed as a longshoreman in Bayonne, N.J.

How did you meet?

The bride-to-be says: "We met through mutual friends. I used to go to work with a friend of his, and one day he came by after work. We hit it off right away and became friends. We spent lots of time together, and then he finally had the guts to say, 'Hey I really like you. Do you want to come to dinner and meet my family?' We'd been good friends for five months at that point, and started dating in June 2003. He asked me to marry him last Thanksgiving, 2004."



Who proposed, and how?

The bride-to-be says: "I walked into his sister's house, and both of our whole families were there. He was already on his knee when I walked through the door. I didn't realize he was proposing, I just said, 'What are you doing on the floor, Ant?'"

"And he said, 'Jo, I love you and think you're the most wonderful person. I want to spend the rest of my life with you.'"

"I said, 'Does my father know?' He was standing right there."

Concerns about the wedding?

The bride-to-be says: "It's all pretty much planned. We listened to each other about what we wanted, and most of it matched. He's very easygoing!"



The Brooklyn Papers / Cory Mayago

Satin & lace

Michelle Fields's latest wedding gown collection combines classic shapes, unconventional color

By Alja Grozdanic
for The Brooklyn Papers

At first glance, Michelle Fields's new Atlantic Avenue boutique looks like a spin-off of the SoHo Prada store, where rows of mannequins are the first thing that captures the eye of a passing window shopper.

Closer examination, however, reveals a major difference: unlike Prada's often naked models, Fields's forms are outfitted in wedding gowns.

Open since September, Fields's Boerum Hill shop, Michelle New York Brides, is still a work in progress. A sign has not yet been installed above the entrance, and, aside from two beautiful orchids on the windowsill, the sunlit, wide-open space with high ceilings and white walls is completely bare. But what's not missing is truly the only thing a bride-to-be would need from a designer: Fields's Spring 2006 collection is ready to be given a spin.

"Can you think of anything else where your job is built around something happy?" said Fields, 37, when asked why she decided to become a bridal designer.

A wife and mother of two boys, Rusty, 7, and River, 4, Fields has always known that she wanted to become a bridal designer. After graduating from Parsons School of Design in 1990, she spent some time studying design in Paris. She opened her first Michelle New York store six years ago on Bond Street, where she carried a ready-to-wear collection in addition to custom-made wedding gowns.

Today, she owns two separate stores on the same block of Atlantic Avenue, Michelle New York Brides and Michelle New York.

Michelle New York, which opened in February, carries a collection of streetwear designs that grew as an offshoot from the bridal line, said Fields. The boutique's wide range of formal and informal dresses, skirts, blouses, coats, pants, purses and belts were either designed by Fields or a well-

Bride's Guide

Michelle New York Brides is located at 396 Atlantic Ave. between Hoyt and Bond streets in Boerum Hill and is open by appointment only. Bridal gowns range from \$500 to \$2,500. bridesmaids gowns: \$250 to \$500. Michelle New York is located at 376 Atlantic Ave. between Hoyt and Bond streets and it is open daily. For more information, call (718) 643-1680 or visit www.michellenewyork.com.

known designer that, she feels, complements her style. This store also carries jewelry and accessories made by local designers. The ready-to-wear clothes are priced between \$50 and \$500.

Bridal collection

Her designs are for brides of all ages, shapes and sizes, said Fields. And although her dresses can be purchased off the rack, she said that most of her customers opt for ready-to-measure dresses. She schedules an appointment with the bride, and together they decide what will look and fit the best.

"The bride usually has a vague idea or a concept of what she wants," said Fields. "My job is translating the idea into a dress."

Fields, who not only loves to dress up, but loves to dress others, said that what she appreciates most about her job is the instant gratification of having created something and the fun she has in the process.

She calls her style "high-end, urban chic — unpretentious, but absolutely beautiful and not too uptight or too dressy," she said.

"Like a midtown girl," she said. "Not too uptown, not too downtown."

The Spring 2006 collection on display is "very feminine" and it consists of four key shapes of white and off white dresses — full skirt, A-line, empire waist and straight skirt. Fields also offers about four variations of each given shape.

And she likes to mix colors and fabrics. A simple white A-line dress, for example, is adorned with a moss green

velvet band around the waist, which, in turn, can translate as a theme for bridesmaid dresses, said Fields.

As far as fabrics go, Fields likes to stick to soft silks and French lace.

"Most of my dresses are silk because it's so beautiful," she said. "It feels nice on her body."

One of her favorite pieces from her spring collection — a dress with a box-pleated maxi skirt and a V-neckline that plunges to the waist, front and back is made with buttercream silk taffeta underlining that peaks through the outer layer of soft, creamy French lace. This is also the most expensive gown in the line, priced at \$2,500.

While ready-to-measure dresses range in price from \$600 to \$2,500 and include fittings with the designer, Fields also offers a more affordable line, brought off-the-rack for as low as \$500, for the so-called no-fuss bride, also referred to as a "destination bride" in industry terms.

A destination bride is a woman getting married in a far-off location, such as an exotic island, and needs a dress that travels well, Fields explained. Typically, this type of bride is looking for a simple, pretty dress in pink or white. Since destination dresses are more practical and less elaborate — and less expensive — the material used to make them is usually a polyester alternative.

The bridesmaid's dress from Fields's 2006 collection is a sleek, floor-length piece with thin straps and a slight hint of a fishtail shape at the bottom. The \$495 four-ply satin dress comes in only two shades, moss green or black. But Fields offers a staple collection of bridesmaids' dresses, ranging in price from \$250 to \$500, that can be ordered in almost any color.

Michelle New York Brides also carries veils and, for the perfect shoe, she has partnered up with high-end designer, Peter Fox.

The construction and interior design of Michelle New York Brides should be complete by mid-December, predicts Fields. She plans on keeping the white color scheme as part of the museum-like setting in the front of the store,



The Brooklyn Papers / Cory Mayago

Maxi-mum romance: Fashion designer Michelle Fields (top) adjusts the display of her gowns in her new Boerum Hill bridal boutique. (Above) Fields' latest collection includes a V-neckline dress, with pleated maxi skirt, that layers French lace over silk taffeta.

where gowns will be displayed on forms as well as hanging on the walls — as pieces of art would be showcased. The back of the store will be set up as an open space that Fields's brides can use to get dressed on their wedding day, compliments of the house.

"That way, they won't have to get a hotel room big enough to fit them and their attendants, as some brides have to," said Fields.

So, what does Fields think a bride should look like on her special day? "She should be beautiful," she said with a smile. "She should be absolutely beautiful."

"We charge more, but we make them just a couple of days before the wedding," she said.

Although Lekberg bakes out of the Gowanus location, she prefers to have her consultations with brides and grooms in the patisserie's Cobble Hill dining room.

"When the two of you are looking for a cake, it's nice to do a consultation and tasting," said Lekberg, who has been a pastry chef for 15 years.

"It's just me and the couple, and they bring their pictures or cut-outs from magazines. We just go over ideas, and I let them know what we can do, and they can take [that information] and decide if they want to go with us. We don't charge for that [consultation], and I just recommend it. If the cake is your dessert, it's a very important part of your meal."

Lekberg's wedding cakes are so gorgeous that even customers who aren't brides can't resist them.

"One woman ordered a small wedding cake for a bridal shower, and it was so charming," said the chef about the diminutive cake. "It's a beautiful thing to have at a shower."

Lekberg's confections can incorporate seemingly any adornment: edible bows, handkerchiefs, Swiss dots, roses, and more.

"Our cakes are bright and cheerful," said Lekberg. "I want to make people smile when they see them."

Wedding cakes begin at \$7.50 per person at Sweet Melissa Patisserie (276 Court St. at Douglas Street in Cobble Hill) and Sweet Melissa Central (296 Bond St. at Sackett Street in Gowanus). For an appointment with Lekberg, e-mail andrea@sweetmellisaspatisserie.com.

'Sweet' temptations

Patisserie's expanded cake division is helmed by artist-chef

By Lisa J. Curtis
The Brooklyn Bride Editor

In April, pastry chef Andrea Lekberg of Cobble Hill's Sweet Melissa Patisserie fired up the ovens of the company's new wedding and specialty cake headquarters in Gowanus. Lekberg's training as a painter at the Art Institute of Chicago shines through in the artistry of her gasp-producing wedding cakes, which she has been baking for Sweet Melissa for the past four years. But since April, these cakes have been her only focus.

"One of the reasons that I'm even in baking is that I love the traditions," Lekberg told The Brooklyn Bride. "I'm so happy that people appreciate wedding cakes as this beautiful symbol of a festive celebration."

Of course, it's imperative that a wedding cake taste as good as it looks, so Lekberg, a graduate of the Cooking and Hospitality Institute of Chicago, creates a new menu of cake flavors each season.

"When I think of what winter makes me feel like, it's cooler out, so our peppermint ganache with espresso buttercream has a wintry feeling to me," said Lekberg, describing one of the flavor combinations on her New Year's 2006 menu.

"We do traditional cakes, but we have a lot of people who want a choco-



The Brooklyn Papers / Cory Mayago

Hats off: Sweet Melissa pastry chef Andrea Lekberg (above) created the shower of edible roses on this hat-shaped cake (left) from fondant.

late or ganache finish," said Lekberg, who also works with slick fondant and buttercream. While she said she admires the "perfect beauty" of a fondant finish on a cake and "artistically I get enjoyment out of fondant, buttercream is beautiful because it begs you to put

your finger in it. It has a natural hand in it. It's not perfect, so it's prettier to me," said Lekberg.

The pastry chef said that Sweet Melissa distinguishes itself from other bakeries because it doesn't freeze its wedding cakes.

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Hangan thrust at woman on Smith

By Lilo H. Stainton
The Brooklyn Papers

A woman on her way home came face to face with a silver handgun and two thieves, police said.

The thugs grabbed the 23-year-old woman from behind as she reached the corner of Smith and Pacific streets at 11:50 p.m. on Dec. 5, after leaving the Bergen Street F train. One man covered her mouth and pulled out a gun while the second thug snatched her purse and searched it, removing \$70 from the wallet.

With the cash in hand, the pair fled before the victim could see their faces, police said.

Three gun-toting men robbed a teenager in the Hoyt Street station on Dec. 9, according to police.

One thug grabbed the 19-year-old victim and pushed him against a wall of the 2/3 station at 7:40 p.m., cops said. Two other attackers bounded over, black guns drawn.

One man stood guard, his weapon ready, and told the victim, "Don't do anything or I'll pop you," police said. The other two rifled through the victim's pockets and snatched his bag. The trio escaped with a camcorder, the man's black leather jacket and \$200.

Police are searching for three men. One is black, 5-foot-9 and 150 pounds, wearing a suede jacket; the second is black, 5-foot-9 and 180 pounds, wearing black and the third man is 6-foot-2, black, 190 pounds, wearing a white jacket and a white hat, according to the victim's description.

Stash snatched
Note: When leaving thousands of dollars hidden in your car, remember to park legally.

A Queens woman learned that lesson when her car was towed on Dec. 5, around 7:30 p.m. When the woman picked up her car at the Brooklyn tow pound the following day, the \$20,000 she had stashed under the front seat was missing, according to the police report the woman filed.

No class

The teacher kept the lecture short, but not short enough. Someone snatched a guest lecturer's wallet from her bag during the five minutes she addressed a class at New York City Technical College on Jay Street on Dec. 9, police said.

The woman had stashed her purse and coat near her seat at 10 a.m., addressed the class for about five minutes, and returned to find she had been robbed.

The wallet held the woman's business cards, insurance information, Hostos College ID and \$7, police said.

Nab Pratt peep

The serial fonder of Pratt Institute has been slapped.

The same teenager allegedly fondled himself in front of two Pratt students on Dec. 4 and was caught by cops two days later in a similar incident.

After the first incident, security guards kicked the 16-year-old off the premises.

POLICE BLOTTER

The 18-year-old told cops that the teen pervert came up behind her and grabbed her left breast as she monitored the desk at an entrance to the athletic facility, on Willoughby Avenue, near Hall Street.

Security held the suspect until cops arrived to make the arrest.

Subway gunplay
Three gun-toting men robbed a teenager in the Hoyt Street station on Dec. 9, according to police.

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Street at 3:45 a.m. on Dec. 10, police said. The man claimed he was a social worker who had just been at the police department, and showed the victim an ID card on a chain around his neck.

But then the supposed social worker turned less sociable, insisting that he had a gun in his pocket, and demanding cash from the victim, police said. After the man turned over his wallet, the thug ran off.

Chicken-seeker

The man wanted free chicken. Now, this chicken is a wanted man.

An employee of a Myrtle Avenue chicken joint was slashed in the face before dawn on Dec. 10 by a man who demanded free poultry from him, police said.

When the 48-year-old employee refused, the man left the store, which is located at Carlton Avenue. But a half-hour later, the man was back, this time with a knife.

"Give me the money!" he demanded, but the worker refused. A scuffle broke out as the thug tried to stab the worker's hand. Instead he knocked the victim to the ground and slashed his face.

The man fled, still without his chicken.

Cold crime

The man who stole the jacket from a man in the Carroll Street subway station on Dec. 7, but couldn't hold onto his prize, police said.

The thug jumped his 42-year-old victim from behind,

throwing the man in a headlock after he stepped from a Coney Island-bound F train at 4:30 p.m. The mugger said, "Give it up," and ripped the parka from the man's back before fleeing. But he dropped the parka on his way from the station, on Smith and President streets.

Teen robbed

Call it just another reason not to smoke.

An 18-year-old boy lost his wallet and video game equipment before dawn on Dec. 5 when four strangers stopped him to inquire whether he was selling cigarettes, police said.

The quartet surrounded the teen on Myrtle Avenue and Carlton Street as he made his way to his father's house, at 4:35 a.m.

At first, they asked if he was selling Newport's, then grabbed his bag and jumped into a grey car, which barreled north on Park Avenue before the teen could see the license plate.

The stolen items include \$25, a Social Security and other identification cards, a Sony Playstation II and one game — ironically, Grand Theft Auto, cops said.

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An armed Grinch strikes on Bergen

By Lilo H. Stainton
The Brooklyn Papers

When a thief goes Christmas shopping, it's the victim who plays Santa. That's how a Dec. 5 foray for a midnight snack ended for one 36-year-old Bergen Street resident, according to police.

Two strangers approached as the man made his way back

POLICE BLOTTER

from the Fourth Avenue bodega, and one of them pulled a gun and said, "You see this? I need a present for my little brother."

The victim saw the situation quite clearly and gave generously, turning over \$60

Nab cab thief on second try

By Lilo H. Stainton
The Brooklyn Papers

Tumbabout was fair play for a knife-wielding thief who robbed a car service driver of his cellphone on Dec. 8 only to try the same scam against the same cab company the next night. Police said the drama began around 11:45 pm on Dec. 8, when thief called a cab to pick him up on Fourth Avenue and 13th Street. He asked the driver to take him to the corner of West Ninth Street and Hamilton Avenue, then redirected the man to take him three blocks further, to Henry and Mill streets.

Once they arrived, the passenger pulled a knife and demanded, "Give me your money or I'll hurt you," police said. The thug snatched the phone and \$40 and ran off.

But the next night, the brazen thief called the same livery service for a car — offering the same Fourth Avenue pick-up address, according to police. A different driver picked up the fare, but the victim of the earlier attack — at work in another vehicle — heard the address over the dispatcher's radio, and telephoned the driver who was headed to the thief's address.

The victim asked the second driver to bring the passenger to the corner of West Ninth and Henry streets, so he could make sure it was the same man who robbed him, according to police. The driver agreed and the victim identified his attacker.

Apparently the encounter surprised the thief, who decided to return the cellphone, police said. But that didn't end it: the victim had also summoned police to the meeting spot, where they arrested the 26-year-old on robbery charges.

Scammed

If it seems too good to be true, it usually is. A 44-year-old woman forgot that sage advice on Dec. 8 when she lost \$1,200 to a stranger who promised to bring her an expensive flat-screen television.

Police said the scam started when the woman struck up a conversation with a stranger at a sofa store on Fifth Avenue, around 12:30 pm, and the man offered her a sweet deal on a nice TV.

The stranger convinced her to go to a bank, withdraw the cash and give it to him, telling her that he would meet her later on Fifth Avenue, near Eighth Street. She waited at the designated spot for an hour, but the stranger and the flat-screen TV never arrived, police said.

Apparently the victim was so focused on her purchase that she didn't get a good look at the scam artist.

Hugging thug

Not every hug is filled with love. So when a thief threw his arms around a 22-year-old man walking on 12th Street, between Eighth Avenue and Prospect Park West, on Dec. 4, it was no sign of affection. His partner in the 10:25 pm attack made things extra clear, punching the victim in the gut and demanding, "Show me where your money is," according to police.

The pair of thugs grabbed the man's wallet — with \$20 — and his Razr cellphone and fled in a tan sedan driven by a third accomplice, police said.

GAP mug

Robbers snatched the wallet of a man leaving the Brooklyn Public Library's central branch after dark on Dec. 5, police said.

One man jumped the 28-year-old victim from behind and threw him in a headlock as he walked in Grand Army Plaza, near Eastern Parkway, at 5:15 pm. Once the man was suitably detained, the second thug rifled through his pockets. The pair fled with the billfold, which contained \$10, according to police.

The victim described one of his two attackers as a black man, 6-foot-1 and 185 pounds, dressed in a white storkel jacket and blue pants.

The early burg

A robber who struck on Sterling Place spread the pain around. Police said that shortly after 6 am, a burglar broke into the Sterling Place building, near Fifth Avenue, and made the rounds. He snatched a 32-inch TV from a woman on the second floor, a Pegasus-brand faucet, valued at \$250, from a man on the third floor, and multiple pairs of Nine West shoes from a woman living on the fourth floor.

The thief used a shopping cart, which none of the residents claimed to have lost.

Someone in the building did see the burglar and now police are looking for a black man, 5-foot-9, who at the time of the crime was dressed in a black ski cap, dark blue jacket and red pants.

Cold crime

A thief tore the jacket from a man in the Carroll Street subway station on Dec. 7, but couldn't hold onto his prize, police said.

The thug jumped his 42-year-old victim from behind, throwing the man in a headlock after he stepped from a Coney Island-bound F train at 4:30 pm. The mugger said, "Give it up," and ripped the parka from the man's back before fleeing. But he dropped the parka on his way from the station, on Smith and President streets.

Burglar blues

This clothes-bound may be a repeat offender. A Fifth Avenue merchant told police the thief who snatched nearly \$1,200 in clothing from his shop on Dec. 10 is the same thug who once stole duds from his Smith Street boutique.

In the latest heist, the robber stepped into the Park Slope shop at 5:35 pm and

loaded up, leaving with seven pairs of jeans, valued at over \$100 each, police said.

A clerk described the robber as 5-foot-9 and 160 pounds, dressed in the favorite fashion statement of the street: a storkel jacket.

Harmony lost

A thief stole music recording equipment worth nearly \$2,000 from the hallway of a President Street house on Dec. 8, police said.

The victim, 38, said he left several amps, cables and digital devices in the hall from 7:30 to 11:30 am. When he returned, all the equipment was gone.

Cold crime

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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

December 17, 2005



Old friends

Fashion model turns vintage love affair into delicious memoir

By Lisa J. Curtis
GO Brooklyn Editor

Upon turning the last page of Alison Houtte's memoir, "Alligators, Old Mink & New Money," GO Girl was grinning from ear to ear. She knew she must seek out the style guru who penned this comic, inspirational tale and ply from her the secrets of living an even more glamorous, fashionable life.

Houtte's memories of her early modeling days — posing for Vogue and Marie Claire magazines, strutting down the runways of Paris and inspiring white-hot fashion designers like Courreges — are impressive, but what is truly jaw-dropping is her transition from that ruffled world to the down-and-dirty mission of rescuing fabulous vintage clothes from Pennsylvania for Brooklyn's style-conscious consumers shopping on what Houtte calls "gritty, grimy, screaming Flatbush Avenue."

After all, as the "gator bag fanatic" says, today's designers continue to be influenced by popular fabrics and shapes from yesterday, so why not wear the original inspiration — especially if Houtte's prices for clothing and accessories are a fraction of those charged on Madison Avenue?

"Mine are better quality and they're the real thing," asserts Houtte. She says that while she still finds Vogue to be an excellent barometer for what's next, after 25 years in the fashion biz, her instinct is her best weapon.

"If I love it, I buy it," said Houtte. When GO Girl made her pilgrimage to Houtte's Prospect Heights boutique (which relocated from Park Slope in 2002), she hoped to earn a nod of approval for her vintage-inspired hoodoothoo Isaac Mizrahi skirt, but mostly she just hoped that she would be considered worthy enough to enter this widely admired temple of fur stoles, beaded bags and sexy shoes.

But as soon as she arrived, GO Girl stopped worrying. This eclectic shop, which carries wares for men and women, has an all-around welcome vibe. Truly, anything goes.

Houtte does not disappoint in the glamour

department. The 6-foot-tall, thin beauty is perfectly polished from her pointy-toed patent leather boots to the flawless edging of her pink lip-gloss. GO Girl basked in her glow, blinking her eyes in awe like Dorothy coming upon the Good Witch.

And there is indeed an aura about Houtte, who works in her store four days a week. Despite being a little under the weather, her enthusiasm was infectious, and her wild stories left GO Girl rollicking with laughter.

During the meeting, at the ungloomy hour of 11, Houtte, 45, revealed that she enjoys a party just as much as GO Girl. In fact, she said she pooh-poohed the idea of having a book signing in a bookstore in favor of having a celebratory bash at the Montauk Club on Dec. 3.

When GO Girl asked what Alison Houtte's signature cocktail is, she revealed that she does not have one, like GO Girl's martini, but three: rum and Diet Coke with lime; gin and tonic; and "ol' Christmas."

my Mom's home-made eggnog."

Just as Hoot Couture must be restocked for the change of seasons, so must a girl's choice of cocktail bend with the wind. GO Girl had so much to learn.

Unfortunately, while Houtte did admire GO Girl's eye-popping skirt, it did trigger a heart-breaking story of loss. It reminded Houtte of the time she sold her mother's hoodoothoo jacket, and upon feeling seller's remorse, she did the unthinkable: she sold her hoodoothoo jacket to a friend — a friend of a friend — asking if she could buy back the jacket.

Houtte recalled that the triumphant owner said, "You're never getting this jacket" because of the number of compliments she had received while wearing it.

GO Girl felt for Houtte — clothes are so much more than the socially mandated way to mask nudity. They are mementos of beloved family members and reminders of wonderful memories.

When the shop's phone rang, interrupting GO Girl's audience with the fashionista, Houtte simply took the phone off the hook and muffled the buzzing with a fur wrap.

Of course! Now GO Girl must add "S500



Just for fun: Model-author Alison Houtte's first memoir chronicles her adventures in vintage clothes shopping for her Prospect Heights boutique, Hooti Couture (top). At the release party for "Alligators, Old Mink & New Money" at the Montauk Club on Dec. 3, a model added a bit of mystery while Houtte embraced James Williams.



the avenue. She didn't get me. I was so proud, I called every neighbor to warn them about the fake nun." (Houtte's also the vice president of the Flatbush Avenue Business Improvement District.)

fur phone muffler" to her own Christmas wish list.

Reading her book, and chatting with Houtte in person, is not unlike a blast of sugar from a too short and too rich, she complained — who she was introduced to by her hairdresser (Frederic Fekkai!), but alas, all party girls must eventually take the brakes.

For Houtte, "Brooklyn was my rehab." Now that she has her book and her shop and her "dashing Argentinean boyfriend" cooking for her at home, it seems Houtte is enjoying her modified pace. And if there aren't enough invitations to fabulous parties in the mailbox, she'll just throw her own.

But the Hooti Couture life is not always glam. Houtte has foiled the dastardly plots of scam artists pretending to be fundraising for little league teams; and thieves, cape-wearing gypsies. She has chased a shoplifter down the avenue and even exposed a faux nun!

"I was beaten every day by those damn nuns," Houtte recalled her suddenly invaluable days as a student of the Sacred Heart school. "I saw the fake veil and sneakers, and asked to see [some nun] ID. She snugged at me, but I told her. 'The word's out about fake nuns on

the avenue.' She didn't get me. I was so proud, I called every neighbor to warn them about the fake nun." (Houtte's also the vice president of the Flatbush Avenue Business Improvement District.)

She grew up in Florida with a yard full of rattlesnakes, so Houtte's no shrinking violet. The youngest of six children, she teamed up with her oldest sister, journalist Melissa Houtte, to write the book.

Houtte supplied the stories — from memory. (After one infuriated boyfriend found her "boyfriend journal," replete with its own rating system, Houtte said she gave up journaling.)

After the holidays, the diva of vintage will undoubtedly make more memories when she hits the highways in her GMC Suburban to make the long trek to Florida to promote her new book. But while she's away, she'll still have Hooti Couture on her mind while she scours Miami's second-hand stores for additions to her Spring 2006 collection.

GO Girl's last Christmas wish is that she could ride shotgun.

"Alligators, Old Mink & New Money: One Woman's Adventures in Vintage Clothing" is available at Hooti Couture (321 Flatbush Ave., at Seventh Avenue in Prospect Heights). For information, call (718) 857-1977 or visit www.hooticouture.com.

THEATER



Farewell tour

After seeing productions of Shakespeare's plays updated with modern dress and staged in parks and parking lots, the Globe Theatre's presentation of "Measure for Measure," at St. Ann's Warehouse in DUMBO beginning Dec. 20, will seem refreshingly old-fashioned.

Directed by John Dove, this British import will be staged in the round, with an all-male cast, period music and clothing.

In the play, Duke Vincentio is dismayed by the moral and social depravity among his subjects, so he deputizes Lord Angelo to govern while he goes undercover as a friar to hear the word on the street. While the play is one of the Bard's comedies, it addresses sobering issues that are still debated, including the death penalty, morality and political corruption.

Mark Rylance (pictured) stars as Duke Vincentio, in his final stage appearance as the Globe's artistic director.

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre of London's "Measure for Measure" will be performed at St. Ann's Warehouse (38 Water St., at Dock Street in DUMBO) on Dec. 20-Dec. 23 and Dec. 26-Dec. 30 at 7:30 p.m.; Jan. 1 at 7 p.m.; and Dec. 21, Dec. 28 and Jan. 1 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$60. For tickets, call (718) 254-8779 or visit the Web site at www.ticketweb.com. — Lisa J. Curtis

SHOPPING



Natural choice

Three-week-old Yaba Bath & Body is my new, favorite drugstore/cosmetics counter. Sure, there aren't many displays and the store is all black white walls and metal shelves, but the products — and affordable prices — speak for themselves.

Yaba carries every family's must-have items, from household cleaners to shampoo.

"Everything is natural and organic here," explained co-owner Sam Husein, who runs the store with his brother, Shaker.

"It's organic, natural, clean stuff. [These companies don't do] animal testing. We operate our business as ethically and morally as possible."

Yaba offers products for men, women and children, plus yoga supplies, nutritional supplements, cosmetics, bathroom accessories and more. But if customers don't see their favorite product, Husein says he'll order it for them.

"We offer the high end to the low end," he said. "We don't want to alienate anyone."

When GO Brooklyn popped into this Prospect Heights shop, we were astounded by the aisles of affordably priced — but popular — lines like Caswell Massey. A box of six olive oil and orange blossom guest soaps (pictured), hand-dipped to simulate picholine olives on a porcelain tray, was priced at \$16.90. (It's \$26 on C-M's Web site.)

"We're 'Back to the Land meets Costco,'" Husein said.

The brothers pass on significant savings to their customers because they keep their overhead low. For example, they encourage customers to bring their own shopping bags, by offering them a five-cent discount. It keeps costs down, while conserving the earth's resources, Husein explained.

Among the product lines Yaba sells are Weleda, Crabtree and Evelyn and Shikai. There are Medina products, such as essential oils and shea butter, as well as Beauty Without Cruelty cosmetics and Mrs. Meyers household cleaners, such as geranium-scented countertop spray.

"All over the store there is educational material about the ingredients in the products, so people understand. It's not just to make money for us, but to educate and make the environment better," said Husein.

"Yaba" is the Arabic word for father, according to Husein, who named the store for his father, who died three years ago. Surely the environmentally friendly products these brothers are selling will benefit the next generation, too.

Yaba Bath & Body is located at 255 Flatbush Ave., at Sixth Avenue. The store is open every day. For information, call (917) 676-7028.

— Lisa J. Curtis

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BROOKLYN

Neighborhood Dining Guide

This week: MYRTLE AVENUE

Five Spot

459-461 Myrtle Ave. at Washington Avenue, (718) 852-0052, www.fivespotsouffood.com
(Disc, MC, V) Entrees: \$10-\$15, \$.

A 60-foot bar, hardwood floors and an intricately patterned tin ceiling decorate Five Spot's dining room, while exposed brick, crushed red velvet and a wood-burning fireplace adorn the walls where co-owners Malik and Kim Armstrong have been serving down-home cooking since 1996. Southern fried chicken and hickory-smoked ribs are the last two of their popular dishes, and they're now serving 100 percent pure beef and turkey burgers, as well as veggie burgers. Five Spot offers a takeout-only daily lunch special for \$5.95 that includes meat (or fish for \$6.95) and two side orders in-house diners get half-off their lunch platters. Side dishes range from black-eyed peas and collard greens to macaroni and cheese and candied yams. Homemade cornbread is served with all dinner entrees.

For dessert, try Five Spot's individual pecan pie or peach cobbler, or opt for the three-layer coconut cake. In the evenings, live music or DJs perform on stage. (Check the "Brooklyn Nightlife" listings for upcoming performances.) Open daily for lunch and dinner. Open for takeout from noon to midnight.

Kum Kau

465 Myrtle Ave. at Washington Avenue, (718) 638-1650 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$5-\$12.75.

At Kum Kau, anything is possible. "Customers are free to customize their own dinners," boasts manager Peter Cheng. While co-owners and chefs Jimmy and Amy Cheng make all of the sauces, other chefs divide duties depending on their specialties. A favorite at Kum Kau is the crispy baked shrimp with mild spices and rice. On Wednesdays, Kum Kau offers an "all you can eat" buffet lunch (\$5.99) and dinner (\$10.99) including Chinese take-out. Each week the buffet menu has a new theme, allowing customers to enjoy traditional Chinese entrees. Kum Kau offers a special family menu for two or more people including soup, an appetizer, an entree, rice and dessert, all for \$11.95 per person. Takeout and private parties also available. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Luz

177 Vanderbilt Ave. at Myrtle Avenue, (718) 246-4000, www.luzrestaurant.com (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$14-\$22.

In July, Vivian Torres and Pedro Muñoz felt the fire that was smoldering on Nuevo Laredo, a vibrant amalgamation of the traditional Cuban, Brazilian, Puerto Rican, Argentinian, Peruvian, Colombian and Caribbean cuisines with unexpected ingredients, like ginger and lemongrass — by opening Luz, a Pan-Latino eatery, on Vanderbilt Avenue. Luz, pronounced "loose," is the Spanish word for light. Diners can begin their meal with the "Luz Colada," made with passion fruit instead of the traditional pineapple.

While the owners transformed a former carriage house-cum-garage into a sleek, dining room with a sky-light, comfortable barstools and a long wooden bar, Chef Jorge Adriaola transforms familiar ingredients into appetizers such as the "rellitos" at clintillo, "mussels steamed with dry white wine and garlic, that are topped with clamato and lime juice; or the "coconut tuna ceviche," diced tuna ceviche in a coconut citrus sauce dressed with red onions and cilantro. For an entree, co-owner Torres says the "churrasco," grilled beef chignon served with sautéed "fideles" (flowers), collard greens and crispy "yucafritos" (fried yuca cake) with mojo, "is quite popular among our diners."

Luz is open daily for dinner and serves brunch, from 11 am to 3:30 pm, on weekends.

Pillow Cafe & Lounge

372 Myrtle Ave. at Adelphi Street, (718) 246-2711, www.pillowcafe.com (Cash only) Entrees: \$5.95-\$7.50.

If you can't seem to locate Pillow Cafe and Lounge — it does not have a sign above its entrance — just look for an inviting cluster of pillows in the window seat. The beige, brown and red interior of the cafe also offers a bar with four barstools and four tables.

★ = Full review available at

Brooklyn Papers.com

Abbreviation Key: AmEx= American Express, DC= Diner's Club, Disc= Discover Card, MC= MasterCard, Visa= Visa Card



The hummus platter at Pillow Cafe and Lounge.

with comfortable chairs. Since its opening in March 2004, the food has been made from familiar, but organic, ingredients.

"We make things that we all ate when we were little," co-owner Biola Odunnu said. The menu ranges from peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to smoked salmon salad. The most popular items are the hummus and avocado sandwich, with cucumbers and tomatoes on sourdough bread, rinsed by their avocado salad with fresh spinach leaves and goat cheese. If you're in the mood for some sweets, Pillow Cafe and Lounge has a selection of brownies and cookies that varies from day to day. Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Sapolo

501 Myrtle Ave. at Ryerson Street, (718) 789-7788 (AmEx, Disc, MC, V) Entrees: \$6-\$10.

At William San's Sapolo restaurant, diners can sample Chinese and Spanish food. The restaurant, which has been open since 2000, offers a menu ranging from lobster chow mein to "carne de res con papas" (green pepper steak). Chinese classics include General Tso's chicken, spicy scallops in garlic sauce, and ham eggs fried young. Or go for Spanish dishes such as the "chicharrones de pollo sin hueso" (fried chicken cracklings), "chuleta frita" (fried pork chops) or paella. The daily lunch special (for \$4.95-\$6.15 depending on choice of meat) is served with your choice of egg drop, wonton or sweet-and-sour soup, as well as white or chicken-fried rice. Open Monday through Saturday for lunch and dinner, and for dinner only on Sundays. Delivery is cash only.

Sushi Okdol

497 Myrtle Ave. at Hall Street, (718) 789-1373, (MC, Visa) Entrees: \$20-\$25.

It's always sushi time at this seven-year-old Japanese and Korean restaurant. Just look at the clock in the dining room — it tells time in sushi! And although the small restaurant, decorated in various shades of blue, is located on the second floor of a two-story building, outside, the enormous sign bearing its name is hard to miss. Owner Eunsoo Kang customized the menu so it appeals to both native Korean and Japanese — as well as American — customers. The most popular dish among Pratt students of Korean descent, according to Kang, is the "Bibimbaboo," a mildly spicy combination of rice, vegetables, eggs and your choice of meat or bean curd. Here's the fun part: the sides are served in separate compartments and the diner can mix them himself.

On the Japanese side of the menu, the dragon roll, made with eel and crab and adorned with artfully sliced pieces of avocado, wine is popular. Lunch specials are served Monday through Friday, from 11:30 am to 3 pm. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Thai 101

455A Myrtle Ave. between Washington and Waverly avenues, (718) 652-4015 (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$4.95-\$14.95.

The effect of the orange art deco lanes reflecting off Thai 101's crisp, whitewashed brick walls, gives it a modern and airy feel. Thai 101 favorites include deep-fried duck or fish served with their special house sauce, mixed vegetables and pineapple. Also popular is the pad Thai, which can be made with beef or chicken versus solely with vegetables or shrimp. Check for the weekly soft-shell crab special with either panang curry, peanut or garlic sauce. For dessert, owner Raymond Beard recommends the Thai Fried Banana (Ice Cream) or the pumpkin custard. Lunch specials served daily for \$4.95. Open Monday through Saturday for lunch and dinner. Sundays are dinner only.

Editor's note: These are a sampling of restaurants in the neighborhood. The list rotates, and it is not comprehensive. For more restaurants, go to www.brooklynpapers.com on the Web. If your restaurant is not listed and you would like it to be, please contact GO Brooklyn Editor Lisa Curtis via email at Curtis@brooklynpapers.com.

Taking the high road

Seventh Avenue's Sette serves up Italian fare with panache

By Tina Barry
For The Brooklyn Papers

It's hard to imagine now, but just a few years ago, Seventh Avenue was the only game in town when it came to Park Slope dining. No one was thrilled with the uninspired restaurants, but if you wanted to eat in the neighborhood, you worked with what was available.

Then Fifth Avenue started its restaurant renaissance, drawing diners westward.

In May, Giovanni Tafari stepped up Seventh Avenue's game when he opened Sette Enoteca e Cucina. Sette Enoteca e Cucina, a trattoria and wine bar that, unlike the pedestrian establishments nearby, aims higher than the

Tafari — who owns Saporo, a transform in Greenwich Village transitory this Slope site from a sporting goods store into a modern, yet convivial, eatery. He placed the talented Amanda Freitag, the former chef de cuisine at Manhattan's Ceca, in the kitchen, where she's putting a twist on homey Italian fare. To enhance her rustic cooking, Tafari installed a wood-burning oven that turns out smoky, thin-crust pizzas, and even dessert crostadas (free-form tarts).

To keep the mood light, there's the "venti per venti," or list of 20 Italian wines for \$20 each. Sette (which is Italian for "seven") is one large, square room. Wooden beams crisscross the ceiling; tables that are placed inches apart can feel cozy — or

too intimate — depending on your take; and a small bar sits on the side of the room. Like the seating, the lights can be seen as too dim or pleasantly romantic. Amusing fixtures made of wire mesh that resemble bug zappers — without the shiver-inducing "tst" sound — cast a warm, ambient glow atop the bar and into portions of the dining area.

On a recent Saturday evening, with every seat taken and diners waiting at the bar, the din was remarkable, but steps have been taken to remedy the situation. (If you run your hands under the table, you'll feel several inches of foam padding that absorb some of the sound.) If Sette continues to be this popular, it will need more of it.

If you look at Sette's ambience with an optimist's eye, you'll see it as a happy place: loud with good cheer, its darkness, condensation or chocolate dips for bread (or fruit) is a thin, cream-based sauce flavored with the cheese that sets off the nuttiness of the spears.

Next came an entree that showcased the chef's talent with elan. The dish is the oven-baked whole "bronzino" (sea bass), its center filled with slices of lemon, red onion and sprigs of lemon thyme and topped with an unusual partner. atop the fish — and it's one of the freshest, sweetest, examples of this variety you'll find anywhere — a Freitrag places a mound of room temperature argenta tossed with capers and garlic, chunks of fingerling potatoes and slices of garlic. Over everything she drizzles an intensely lemony, herbaceous dressing.

One glitch that appeared early in the meal was underseasoning. A dish that sounds as gutsy as sardines, topped with herbed bread crumbs and baked in the wood-burning oven, should pack a wallop of flavor. These two large fish are dense and briny, their topping crunchy and delicately lemony, but after a couple



What a catch: Sette's wood oven-roasted "bronzino," stuffed with red onion and lemon, is served with a salad of arugula, fingerling potatoes and capers.

of bites, I longed for a ramekin of sea salt on the table. (And this request shouldn't be seen as demeaning to the chef.)

The "orecchiette" ("little ear"-shaped pasta) is tossed with a bland, grainy pork ragu that cries out for seasoning. And if crisp pancetta is included in the dish — as it's described in the menu — I missed it.

Yet crisp, salty circles of pancetta add just the right hit of saline to a subtle starter of roasted asparagus in Parmesan "fondue." The fondue (not to be confused with "fondue," the thick cheese or chocolate dips for bread or fruit) is a thin, cream-based sauce flavored with the cheese that sets off the nuttiness of the spears.

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ing that unifies the ingredients. It's a masterful mix of textures and temperatures that make for fine eating.

Desserts are beautifully executed and delicious. Freitag uses mascarpone (Italian cream cheese) for her cheese-cake and it's superb. Lighter than American versions, it has a slightly nut-like taste enhanced by its almond-flavored "amaretto" cookie crust. Beside it is a mound of quince poached in wine and a bit of vanilla. The fruit possesses a texture that's silkier than a pear with a floral flavor that complements the velvety cake.

The gelato comes from well-known Il Laboratorio del Gelato in Manhattan. I tried three scoops — a delicately flavored pumpkin, a pungent espresso and a creamy hazelnut. Each was unbeatable. The gelato is offered with a buttery, house-baked biscotti that rivaled its partners.

Right now, Sette Enoteca e Cucina's patio is enclosed and heated, its temporary plastic enclosure strung with twinkling white Christmas lights. In the spring, when the tarp is removed, its diners will sip their Italian wine outdoors, feeling like they've traveled a great distance from Seventh Avenue.

Movie and dinner - in bed

If you tell your friends you had dinner in bed on a first date, will they call you a tramp? They won't if your horizontal meal happens at Monkey Town's seating room.

Inside the restaurant and video-performance space, opened in October by Montgomery Knott and Meghan Czerninski, there's an entertainment space with low-lying beds and four theater-sized screens where you can stretch out and listen to local bands perform or watch videos while you eat.

If the dine-while-you-recline concept is too cozy, you can try chef Coleman Lee Foster's global cuisine in Monkey Town's (named for the graffiti depicting monkeys scrawled around the neighborhood) front room where the booths are low-to-the-ground, the chandelier is made of cardboard, and murals by neighborhood artists cover the walls.

Foster, formerly of Gramercy Tavern, Esca and Bouley Bakery, is cooking with "all the world's ingredients," says Knott, "but the food isn't fussy. It's just really good home cooking."

Home would have to include a pretty sophisticated cook. On the menu are dishes like curry fish fry, served with rosewater-flavored yogurt, and Indonesian pulled pork with basmati rice and three sauces.

Pastry chef Heather Scharr's milk chocolate mousse, flavored with curry and served with chickpea brittle and whipped cream, and her cheesecake, with a delicate rosewater and pomegranate syrup, fit neatly into the international cuisine theme.

Monkey Town (58 North Third Street, between Wythe and Kent streets in Williamsburg) accepts American Express, Discover, MasterCard and Visa. Entrees: \$10-\$22. The restaurant and screening room is open for dinner Tuesday through Sunday, 4 pm to midnight. Closed Mondays. Reservations for Thursday, Friday and Saturday shows are strongly suggested. For reservations and entertainment schedule, call (718) 386-1369 or visit the Web site www.monkeytownny.com.

— Tina Barry

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OUTDOORS AND TOURS

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: Help count during the annual bird census event at Prospect Park's Audubon Center. 3 pm to 4 pm. Enter park at Wilcox entrance. (718) 287-3400.

ICE SKATING: at Prospect Park's Wollman Rink. \$5 admission, \$3 children and seniors. \$5 skate rental. 2 pm to 6 pm and 7 pm to 10 pm. Enter park at junction of Ocean Avenue and Lincoln Road. (718) 965-8999.

BIBLE TABLEAU: New Utrecht Reformed Church hosts its annual outdoor holiday "Living Nativity" featuring live actors depicting Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus in the manger, as well as live sheep and other barnyard animals. 3 pm to 6 pm. 18th Avenue, between 53rd and 54th streets. At 7:30 pm, the Fort Hamilton Jazz Band, conducted by Paul Kohn, gives a concert in the Parish Hall of the church. (646) 523-7272. Free.

PERFORMANCE

CHAMBER MUSIC: Old Stone House presents a concert featuring The Brooklyn Chamber Players in their annual concert. \$10. \$5 members. 2 pm. JJ Byrne Park, Fifth Avenue between Third and Fourth streets. (718) 768-3195.

CONCERT: Brooklyn Public Library's central branch hosts a contemporary gospel concert with The Esplanade. 2 pm. Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-2100. Free.

DUETS: Hoger Collection presents an evening of de-compositional duets featuring NY composer Daniel Carter with improvising bassoonist Judy Dunaway, sound artist Radio Ruck and composer Andrea Parkers. 7 pm reception. 8 pm. 111 Grand St. (718) 288-5022. Free.

BAM: Brooklyn Ave. of Music presents "Sweeney," by the Walla Walla Carolina Quartet. \$20 to \$45. 7:30 pm. BAM Heavy Theater, 651 Fulton St. (718) 636-4100.

BARGE MUSIC: presents an all-Bethoven classical music program. \$35. 7:30 pm. Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River. (718) 624-2083.

HOLIDAY HARMONIES: Brooklyn Youth Chorus performs a range of songs and carols from medieval times through the present. \$8 to \$28. 7:30 pm. St. Charles Borromeo Church, 21 Sidney Place. (718) 243-9447.

OPERA: The Opera Company of Brooklyn hosts a read-through version of "Lucia Di Lammermoor" in the casual atmosphere of a residence. \$20. 8 pm. Reservations must be made in advance due to limited space. Location to be announced. Email: info@operabrooklyn.com.

IMPACT THEATER: presents a revival of "Out of the Frying Pan," a 1940s comedy. \$15. \$12 seniors and students. 8 pm. 190 Underhill Ave. (718) 390-7163.

HEIGHTS PLAYERS: presents "A Christmas Carol," an adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic tale. \$12. \$10 seniors, students and children. 8 pm. 26 Willow Place. (718) 237-2752.

CORPORATE CINEMA: St. Ann's Warehouse presents the celluloid-free fifth "International Forum of Corporate Cinema" exploring parallel universes. In English and French. \$25. 8 pm. 38 Water St., between Main and Dock streets. (718) 254-8779.

CHILDREN

BROOKLYN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM: hosts an early learner's workshop. Kids are invited to explore the "Global Shoes" exhibit and learn about shoes from around the world. \$4. 10 am to 12:30 pm. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 735-4600.

MOVIES: Brooklyn Public Library's central branch hosts a children's film series. "Winnie the Pooh: A Very Merry Pooh Year." 11 am. Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-2100. Free.

PUPPETWORKS: presents French fairy tale, "Beauty and the Beast." \$5. \$3 children. Recommended for ages 4 and older. 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm. 338 8th Ave. at Fourth Street. (718) 965-3391.

BROOKLYN BABIES: Brooklyn Public Library's Sunset Park branch hosts a short film, "Reading with Babies" by Susan Strub. Sign your baby up for an ABC library card. Get expert advice on how to read. 1 pm. Sunset Park Library, Fourth Avenue at 51st Street. (718) 567-2856. Free.

TRANSIT MUSEUM: Holiday workshop for kids, ages 4 and older, storytelling and card making. \$5. \$3 kids and seniors. 1 pm. Schermerhorn Street at Boerum Place. (718) 694-1823.

CHRISTMAS PLAY: The Salvation Army

SUN, DEC 18

PERFORMANCE

VIOLIN: Brooklyn Public Library's central branch presents Australian violinist Amy Sharratt. 2 pm. Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-2100. Free.

CHRISTMAS FAIR: "Blue" magazine hosts a fair featuring knitwear, jewelry, beauty goods, ornaments, vintage clothing, handbags and more. Also, Rachael Matthews signs her book, "Knots: 25 Great and Glam Things to Knit." Noon to midnight. The Warehouse, 261 Driggs Ave. (718) 595-2900.

CRAFTS FAIR: Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture hosts a fair of original arts and crafts including jewelry, pottery, art prints, toys, clothing, decorations, mirrors, candles, paper art, bags, stained glass and more. 11 am to 4 pm. 53 Prospect Park West. (718) 768-2972.

HOLIDAY FAIR: "Blue" magazine hosts a fair featuring knitwear, jewelry, beauty goods, ornaments, vintage clothing, handbags and more. Also, Rachael Matthews signs her book, "Knots: 25 Great and Glam Things to Knit." Noon to midnight. The Warehouse, 261 Driggs Ave. (718) 595-2900.

TASTING: LeFebvre Ltd. offers several different kinds of meat, wine made with fermented honey. Noon to 9 pm. 416 Van Brunt St. (718) 260-0858. Free.

SMALL WORKS SHOP: Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition hosts a show featuring over 100 artists from the borough. Most art is priced under \$200. 2 pm to 5 pm. 515 Court St. (718) 596-2056.

WORKSHOP: The Museum of Contemporary African Diaspora Arts presents Release Through Writing, "in collaboration with the NY Writers Coalition. 2:30 pm to 4 pm. James Davis Arts Building, 80 Hanson Place. (718) 230-0492. Free.

BAMCINEMATEK: presents a triple-feature, "Days of Being Wild" (1990) at 4 pm; "In the Mood for Love" (2000) at 6 pm; "2046" (2004) at 8 pm. \$10. \$7 students. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 636-4100.

OPEN MIC: Salt Marsh Nature Center hosts its annual event of poems, stories and songs. Light refreshments served. 7 pm. 302 Ave. U. Call for info: 311. Free.

FLM FEST: Brooklyn Heights Jewish International Film Festival presents the film "Crown Heights." 7 pm. 51st Avenue, 117 Remsen St. (718) 596-4840. Free.

TRUNK SHOW: Holiday shopping event featuring handcrafted jewelry, designer bedding, robes, scarves, shawls and hats. 8 pm. Congregation B'nai Avraham, 117 Remsen St. (718) 596-4840.

TOY DRIVE: 88th Precinct and 88th Precinct Community and Youth Council need new toys for boys and girls. For drop-off locations, call (718) 636-6569.

JOY DRIVE: Starbuck's Holiday Angels collects new, unwrapped books and toys for distribution to hospitalized children served by the Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation. Drop off items at any hospital in Brooklyn. www.starlight.org.

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MON, DEC 19

SPEAK EASY STORIES: Real stories told by real people. \$8 cover, one drink minimum. 7 pm. Night and Day, 230 Fifth Ave. at President Street. (718) 783-1197.

BAMCINEMATEK: presents a series of films directed by Nelson Pereira dos Santos. Today: "How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman" (1971). \$10. \$7 students. 4:30 pm, 6:30 pm and 9 pm. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 636-4100.

ST. ANN'S WAREHOUSE: presents Shakespeare's Globe Theater of London in "Measure for Measure." All-male cast, period music and Elizabethan costumes. \$40. 7:30 pm. 38 Water St. (718) 254-8779.

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TUES, DEC 20

STRESS TALK: Visiting Nurse Regional Health Care System presents a talk on how to deal with stress. 11 am. 715 Leonard St. (718) 923-5350. Free.

BAMCINEMATEK: presents a series of films directed by Nelson Pereira dos Santos. Today: "Tent of Miracles" (1977). \$10. \$7 students. 4:30 pm, 6:30 pm and 9 pm. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 636-4100.

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SHOP

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FEST

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FIFTH AVENUE / PARK SLOPE / BROOKLYN 2008

5TH AVE

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BROOKLYN

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SUNDAY - DEC- 18[illegible]**MONDAY - Dec. 19**[illegible]**TUESDAY - Dec. 20**[illegible]**WEDNESDAY - Dec- 21**[illegible]

THURSDAY - Dec. 22

[illegible]

FRIDAY - Dec. 23

[illegible][illegible]

SATURDAY - Dec. 24

[illegible]

TIME WARNER
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Channels 34, 35, 56, 57



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OUR OPINION

No votes for a thief

Roger Green must be stopped. Sliding down today's ever-slippery slope of cynicism, the disgraced Brooklyn Assemblyman now has the temerity to suggest that his guilty plea last year for stealing thousands of dollars from the state's coffers will not be a big deal as he campaigns to defeat Rep. Ed Towns in Brooklyn's 10th congressional district.

"People do not feel it's a major issue," Green told the New York Times last week.

We beg to differ. No, we don't beg. We scream.

As our own Ariella Cohen discovered during a fact-finding mis-



Assemblyman Roger Green

sion within the 10th congressional district, Brooklyn voters actually do think it is a "major issue" when a politician is caught with his hand in the till, pleads guilty to robbing his own constituents and is forced to resign in disgrace.

That Green was eventually re-elected to the very same office speaks more to the power of incumbency and the lack of talent on the scandal-tarred Democratic bench, than forgiveness.

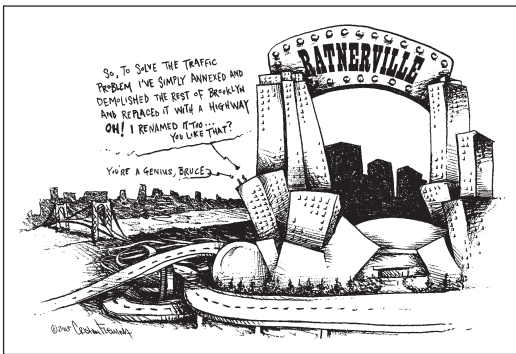
Green's crime — he took free rides from a private company and then billed the state for travel expenses — was hardly a hanging offense. But the fact that he

thought he could get away with it — that he felt above the law that we send him to Albany to make transgressions unforgivable.

In the same Times interview, Green trash-talked Towns in the language of the reformer he will never be. "There is a question of his legislative leadership," Green said. "You have someone in office for more than 20 years and has only one bill to his credit that has been voted into law."

But for our money, we'd rather have a back-bencher than a convicted — and unrepentant — thief.

ALL DRAWN OUT



© David Thomas

TO THE EDITOR

Yassky is pulling a 'Dr. David and Mr. Newt'

To the editor:

As someone who worked for Councilmember David Yassky in his first campaign, I read Gersh Kuntzman's article with great interest ("Yassky Channels Gingrich," Dec. 3). Much has changed since that campaign, apparently. For Mr. Yassky to advocate a "Contract with America" concept is ironic, since he's now pursuing a "Contract ON Brooklyn" approach here at home.

Councilmember Yassky refuses

to oppose the placement of luxury housing in the Brooklyn Bridge Park, refuses to oppose the monstrous Atlantic Yards proposal, supports inappropriate development in Williamsburg and, last month, led the effort to undo landmark protection for the Austin, Nichols warehouse, designed by Cass Gilbert.

And all the while, he collects big checks from the developers who benefit from his abuses of public policy.

David Yassky has sold out his

own district. What is the price he'll

ask for a larger piece of Brooklyn? **Jerry Foster, Brooklyn Heights**
(Editor's note: Councilmember David Yassky declined The Brooklyn Papers' invitation to respond to this letter.)

Wild Red Hook

To the editor:

Those two dumb crickets in your editorial cartoon (All Drawn Out, Dec. 3) better get in the long line of

those who are just finding Red

Hook attractive to lots of wild writers you'll never see in other parts of New York City.

I never saw a mockingbird until I came to Red Hook — and in my time here I have seen Red-Tailed hawks and kestrels, many sorts of ducks, cormorants, Great White herons, Black-Crowned night herons, woodpeckers, and even a

hummingbird.

My old friend Skinny used to bring up blue crabs by the pullout down at Pier 12. ("They come over from Jersey," he'd say.) On four legs, we have both possums and raccoons.

And at my house, we have a thriving population of very fast millipedes (or something) that looks like a runaway mustache. I hope development will include enough open space for man and beast alike.

Phil Forbes, Red Hook

Gersh on the tube

The Brooklyn Papers

Excited about the behind-the-scenes race for City Council Speaker? Then check out BCAT's weekly "Reporters Roundtable," which features The Papers' Editor Gersh Kuntzman, Daily News columnist Errol Louis and Crain's New York

Business reporter Erik Engquist. The half-hour program airs Saturday, Dec. 17, at 9 pm and is repeated on Monday, Dec. 19, at 10:30 am, Wednesday, Dec. 21, at 10:30 am and 6:30 pm, and Thursday, Dec. 22, at noon and 8 pm. Check listings to determine what channel BCAT is on in your area.

BROOKLYN BRIEFS

St. Francis helps Marty staff Bklyn's beaches



Marty Markowitz, seen here at Coney Island on Jan. 1, 2002, has reached out to his Polar Bear friends to help the city parks department find lifeguards.

The Brooklyn Papers

It's never too early — or too cold — to start thinking about hiring lifeguards. Borough President Marty Markowitz demonstrated forward thinking this week — or maybe he was just dreaming of summer — when he convened a "summit" meeting to help the city hire the 1,200 lifeguards it will need.

Last year, the city employed only 1,010 lifeguards, causing long stretches of beach to be closed to the public.

"Like me, the majority of Brooklynites summer in Brooklyn," Markowitz said. "When the beaches are closed, people don't come, and that is the kiss of death in the tourist trade."

The summit meeting produced at least one good idea.

The St. Francis College water polo coach said members of his team — which just won the NCAA Eastern region championship, thank you very much — would be happy to get paying jobs swimming in the ocean all summer.

But most of his players are foreigners who are here on student visas and are unable to work unless they go

home, get new visas and come back. "Obviously, they're not going to do that," said the coach, Carl Quigley, who suggested setting up a student-internship program that could circumvent those nasty State Department rules.

"It exists in the world of finance, where foreign students can get internships with Morgan Stanley or others," Coach Quigley said. Members of the Coney Island Polar Bears also volunteered to find new lifeguards, despite the uncomfortable warmth of the summer water.

And Markowitz vowed to ask the city Department of Education to teach middle- and high-school students how to swim, a relic of a bygone era.

"Brooklyn should be growing our own lifeguards," the borough president said.

"Without the ski slopes, Aspen is just a subdivision. Without the beaches, Coney is... well, let's not even go there."

"Something is profoundly lost when we deprive our citizenry of the right to sit on the beach at the height of summer and seek refuge from the insufferable heat."

Would-be lifeguards are urged to call 311 for an application. — Gersh Kuntzman

No no no! It's FREE on Sunday

The Brooklyn Papers

Brooklyn drivers apparently trust outdated traffic signs more than their elected officials.

Even though the City Council famously abolished metered parking on Sundays people all over Brooklyn are still feeding the no-arm bandits.

"I see shoppers jumping out of the store to feed the meter seven days a week," said one clerk at Brooklyn Industries, a clothing shop at Atlantic Avenue and Smith Street.

Could Brooklyn drivers have missed the boisterous media coverage of city officials pranking giant Xs over the unmetered meter signs?

Or is it that they simply trust traffic signs more than the City Council?

"I heard them say we don't have to pay any more but look, the sign says to pay," said one shopper, pointing to a sign that clearly states "Including Sundays."

There are 13,000 such signs all over the city — and the Department of Transportation says it could take a year to replace them all.

"Just ignore the signs for now," said DOT spokesman Greg Chin. (Remember that name when you get a ticket on a Sunday.)

Councilmember Vincent Gentile (D-Bay Ridge) explained the Sunday meter-freeing phenomenon is a result of a "cynical" public that simply "can't believe that something good has happened to them, especially not at this time of year!"

— Ariella Cohen



A motorist feeds a parking meter last Sunday on Atlantic Avenue. He was unaware of a new law abolishing Sunday meters.

DUMBO man fights City Hall — and wins!

The Brooklyn Papers

They say you can't fight City Hall, but one Brooklyn man fought city hall — and won.

Woodworker Jonah Zuckerman became a DUMBO folk hero last week when he was reimbursed by the city, which towed his car after installing new "No Parking" signs after

he had parked.

"I came back and not only was my car gone, but there was fresh cement where they'd put the new signs," said Zuckerman, who owns City Joinery, a high-end furniture factory.

"It's outrageous that you can park your car legally and they can just change the sign and tow you."

This week, a judge agreed with

Zuckerman. But getting there was a bumpy road.

After retrieving his car from tow pound — where he met other disgruntled victims of the famed "Bridge Street Massacre" — Zuckerman fought back, demanding a letter from the Department of Transportation admitting that the signs had been installed on the same day Zuckerman

had parked.

It took him a month of phone calls, but he eventually got the letter, which impressed the city administrative judge.

DOT spokesman Craig Chin said it is not uncommon for cars to be towed when the city installs new signs. But Chin said victims of the ol' switcheroo should merely call

DOT and get a letter similar to the one Zuckerman received. But first they have to bail out their car at the tow pound and pay the ticket.

For Zuckerman, the sweet victory turned sour quickly: His car was again towed on Wednesday.

"There was no sign!" he asserted, vowing a new fight.

— Gersh Kuntzman



Adela Pena and Neal Whitney, 4, carry home a Christmas tree just purchased on Clinton Street at Atlantic Avenue, on Dec. 11.

Crown Hts revisited

Come for the movie, stay for the politics.

The Jewish Executive Learning Annex in Brooklyn Heights is sponsoring a screening of the 2002 film "Crown Heights" tonight (Saturday) at 7 pm — but the real drama will come afterwards, when some of the people who were around during the 1991 riots will discuss what happened during the city's darkest week.

City Councilmember Tracy Boyland, Rabbi Shea Hecht and Brooklyn Democratic Party secretary Steve Cohn will participate in a discussion moderated by Pratt Institute rabbi Simcha Weinstein.

"We're not going to revisit the riots to blame one side or the other, but we're going to talk about where we are today," Weinstein said.

"It's going to be a positive discussion about all of the reconciliation that has been achieved in Crown Heights. There is tolerance and understanding. I see black children shooting hoops with yeshiva guys and it's a beautiful thing."

Admission is free to the Dec. 17 screening and discussion, at Congregation B'nai Avraham, 117 Remsen St. in Brooklyn Heights. — Kuntzman

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